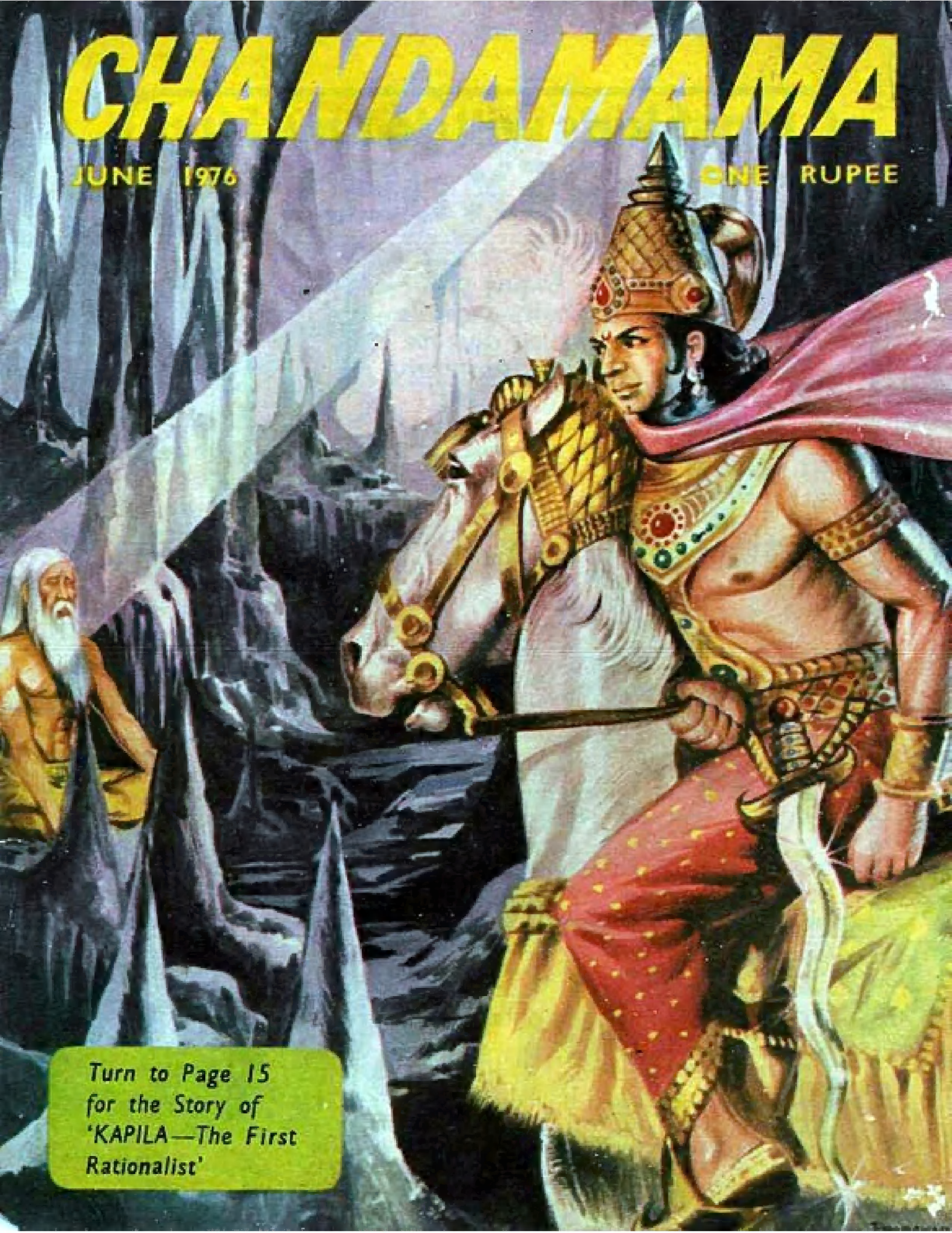


CHANDAMAMA

JUNE 1976

ONE RUPEE



Turn to Page 15
for the Story of
'KAPILA—The First
Rationalist'

Most kids will do anything for **REX JELLY!**



I won't pull
choti's pigtails
if you give me
Raspberry
REX
Jelly



I'll let Jolo play
with my doll
if she gives me
her Strawberry
REX
Jelly



I'd even do
my arithmetic
homework for
Cherry
REX
Jelly



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HERE'S HOW MY DADDY LOOKS...



WHEN
HE'S
SEEING
MY
REPORT
CARD...



WHEN
HE'S
HAPPY...



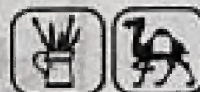
WHEN
I BREAK A
WINDOW
PANE...



WHEN I
FRIGHTEN
HIM WITH
A MASK
OVER
MY FACE...

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1st Prize : Laxmi Khanna, Bareilly. 2nd Prize : Indrani Sanyal, Hyderabad. 3rd Prize : R. Shobha Rao, Hyderabad. Consolation Prizes : Rajendra Shetye, Vile Parle, Bombay. Jessie Peas, Bombay. Shalini A. Jaisinghani, Bandra, Bombay. Jayraj Nair, Calcutta. B. Achata Rama, Vizianagaram. Merit Certificates : Sanjay Dighe, Baroda. B. K. Kumar, Calcutta. Ronny Paul, Bandra, Bombay. Taposh Kumar Moitra, Hussaingenj. K. Prasanna Kumar, Bangalore. Harivikram Lamba, New Delhi. Annie Phillips, Poona. R. K. Babu, Bangalore. Alok Kumar Banik, Kalamati. Atul Kumar, Lucknow.



CHANDAMAMA

Vol. 6

JUNE 1976

No. 12

Founder: CHAKRAPANI

A NEW SHADE OF COLOUR FOR YOUR HOLIDAYS

Indrajal, witchery, sorcery, voodoo, hoodoo — many are the names given to that practice which at once arouses awe and interest. And the most commonly used term for it is magic, by which we understand the art (no less science!) of producing strange results by some secret power.

What, indeed, are these powers? Natural, unnatural, or supernatural? People in the past believed and many even believe today, that there are hidden powers in Nature and with spirits which the magicians mastered and thereby could do miracles. But we know that what seem as miracles are not always so. Most of them are illusions created by tricks, at times helped by science. This is what the modern magicians do. No doubt, it is great fun!

Although magic developed in all the countries in the remote past, India is said to be its oldest home. Magic as an art was certainly cultivated in India with earnestness, under the patronage of the ancient rulers. After it had suffered a long negligence, it has seen a glorious revival in the recent past. The greatest name associated with this revival is P. C. Sorcar. He was closely associated with the *Chandamama*, telling its readers the secret of a number of tricks through a series of features. One of his successors, A. C. Sorcer, is now continuing the series. He does it in a novel way—teaching a trick through a tale. His series was confined to the other eleven language editions of your magazine. Beginning with this issue it would reach the readers of the English *Chandamama* too. We hope, you will practise at least some of the tricks and add a new shade of colour to your holidays.

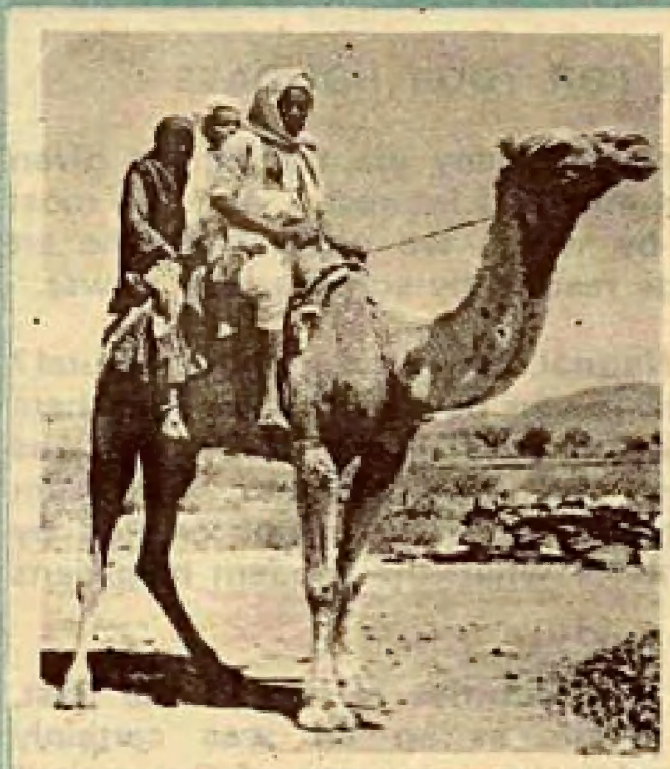
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PLUS 8 COMPLETE STORIES

BESIDES OTHER REGULAR FEATURES

PHOTO CAPTION CONTEST



Mr. Prasad



Bishan Maheswari

- * These two photographs are somewhat related. Can you think of suitable captions? Could be single words, or several words, but the two captions must be related to each other.
- * Rs. 20 will be awarded as prize for the best caption. Remember, your entry must reach us by 30th JUNE
- * Winning captions will be announced in AUGUST Issue.
- * Write your entry on a POST CARD, specify the month, give your full name address, age and post to : PHOTO CAPTION CONTEST, CHANDAMAMA MAGAZINE, MADRAS - 600 026

Result of Photo Caption Contest held in April Issue

The prize is awarded to: B. Mahadeva Baliga

'Sadhana', 604-3rd Cross, Hanumantha Nagar, Bangalore 560 019.

Winning Entry—'Lonely Light'—'Lovely Sight'.

NEWS FOR YOU...

Shape of the Continents to come

Africa will drift towards Europe and the Straights of Gibraltar will be sealed. What is more, the Mediterranean Sea will evaporate completely!

This is what would happen if the predictions made by a well-known scientist, Dr. Peter J. Wyllie, come true. But there is no reason to postpone your journey across the Mediterranean if it is so planned now, for what Dr. Wyllie has said is expected to happen a few million years later.

Frighten yourself to Win Gold Medal!

Do you know how 17-year-old Steve Holland of Australia set world record recently in men's 800 and 1,500 metres free-style swimming? He imagined that he was being chased by a monster shark. This self-suggested terror gave him the great speed. He got the idea observing that in an aquarium the fish gathered unusual speed when they were frightened.

Blades as Breads

A Swiss citizen, Camille Rossier, who prefers to call himself a 'fakir', relishes eating blades. Recently he celebrated his 50th birthday by swallowing his 50,000th blade.

....AND SOME VIEWS TOO

A Guide to 20th Century Thoughts on Liberty

Men fight for liberty and win it with hard knocks. Their children, brought up easy, let it slip away again, poor fools. And their grand-children are once more slaves.

— D. H. Lawrence

It is not the fact of liberty but the way in which liberty is exercised that ultimately determines whether liberty itself survives

— Dorothy Thompson

Only reason can convince us of those three fundamental truths without a recognition of which there can be no effective liberty: that what we believe is not necessarily true; that what we like is not necessarily good; and that all questions are open.

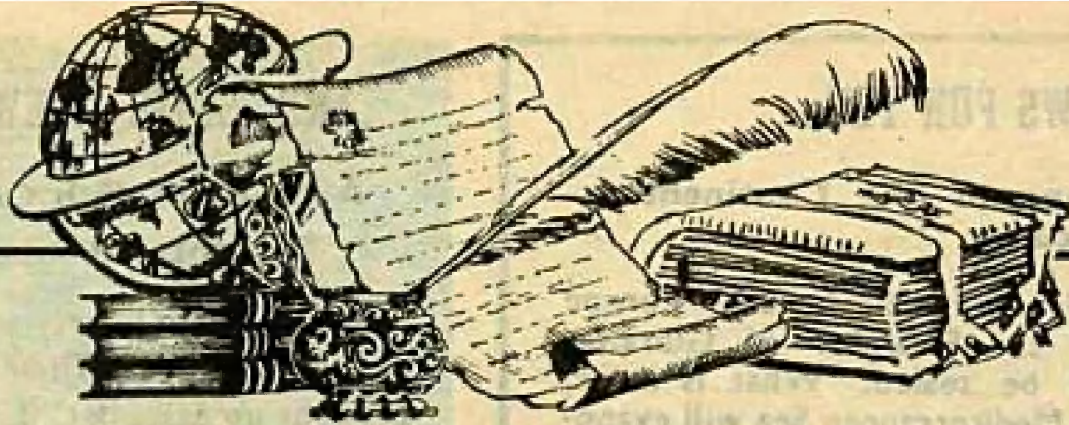
— Clive Bell

Truth is mysterious, elusive, ever to be won anew. Liberty is dangerous, as hard to get along with as it is exciting.

— Albert Camus

Liberty means responsibility. That is why most men dread it.

— George Bernard Shaw



Four hundred years before Christ, Syracuse was ruled by a tyrant named Dionysius. Although he had much power, he had no peace of mind. Being ambitious, he wanted to conquer the prosperous land of Carthage. There were several battles between his army and that of Carthage. Dionysius, of course, was often victorious. But victory in violent battles only meant an increase in the number of his enemies. By and by he became suspicious of almost everybody. So much so that even his wife and children could not approach him without being searched for any possible hidden weapon under their garments! He would not trust a barber with a sharp razor. Yet he would not like his beard to grow quite long. So he would burn it from time to time!

Needless to say, we cannot call such a man happy, however rich or powerful he might be. But as it happens to the rich or the powerful people in all the ages, Dionysius was surrounded by flatterers who would call him brave, great, noble, happy and what not. Dionysius relished all the virtues attributed to him; but he did not like being called happy!

Foremost among the tyrant's flatterers was a man called Damocles. One day the flatterer pronounced Dionysius as the happiest man in the world. The tyrant was in no mood to appreciate this. He decided to give Damocles a taste of the sort of happiness he enjoyed! He invited the flatterer to sit on the throne for a while. The highly flattered flatterer as-

THE SWORD OF DAMOCLES

cended the throne and joyously goggled his eyes at the feast of delicious food and heaps of wealth laid out before him.

But his joy was momentary. He suddenly saw a dazzling sword hanging over his head suspended from the roof only by a thread of horse's hair!

He paled and panicked. He prayed to Dionysius to allow him to leave the throne immediately. His prayer was granted after all had enjoyed the fun to their hearts' content.

Dionysius wished to impress Damocles with the fact that grave fear or sense of insecurity often went with power and wealth. The phrase, the sword of Damocles or Damocles's sword, has come to mean an impending danger in the midst of prosperity.



THE CLEVER PRINCE!

A certain king had two sons. The elder prince was smart and brave. But the younger one was a poltroon.

One day the younger prince asked the king, "I have heard that big palaces have secret passages leading to places of safety. What about our palace?"

"Our palace too has such passages!" replied the king.

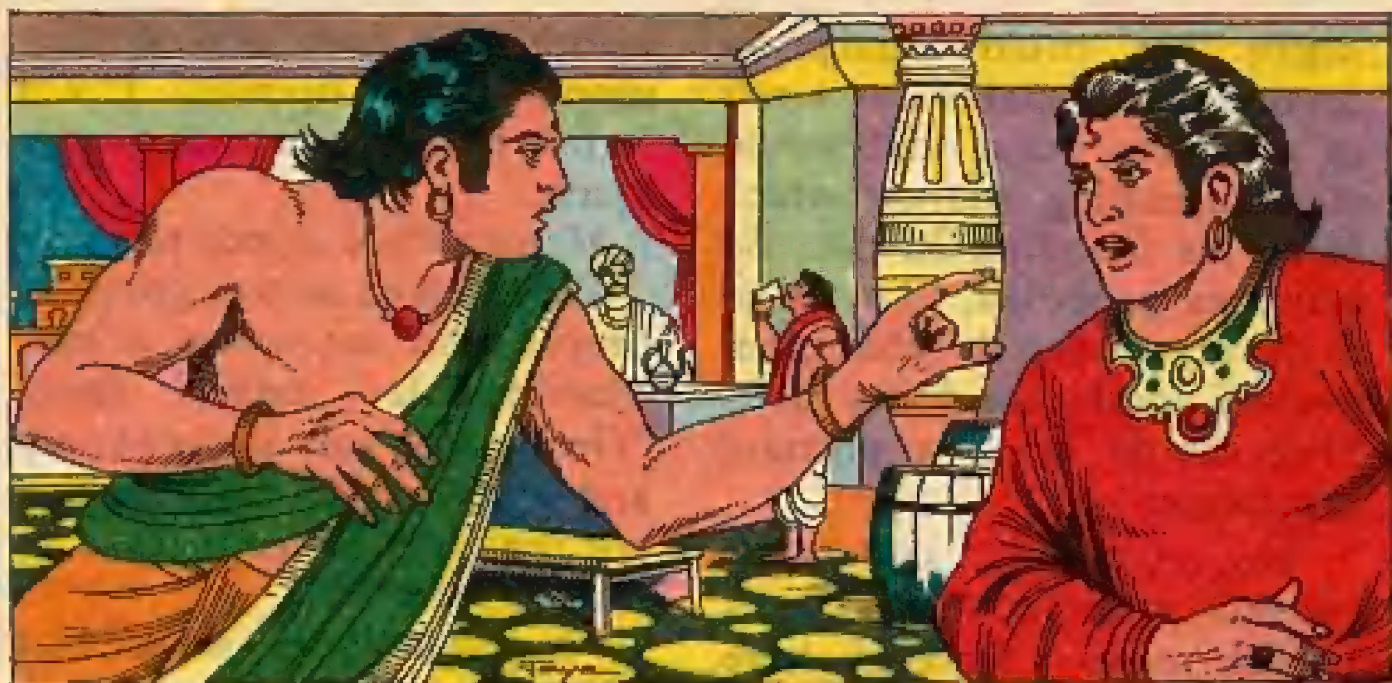
The prince insisted on seeing one. Intrigued, the king asked, "But why are you so eager to see it?"

"Well, if by chance our palace is attacked by enemy, I can slip away to a place of safety if I know the passage! Is that not clever of me?" asked the prince.

The king stood up and instantly removed a false cover from a wall and a secret passage was revealed. The prince entered it with curiosity and advanced a few steps.

Suddenly the king shouted at him, "My boy! Be a little more clever and continue to advance. You will reach a cave in a distant hill. Live there forever in peace. A coward like you does not deserve to live in the palace!" He shut the opening of the passage





LEGENDS OF INDIA

THE PATH OF TRUTH

This happened thousands of years ago. In a certain hilly town named Bhauvana lived two friends named Gautama and Manikundala. Gautama came of a poor family while Manikundala was the son of a wealthy merchant.

At the height of their love for each other the two friends had taken the vow that one of them would never forsake the other.

But it was unfortunate that although Gautama was a Brahmin lad and his father was a learned man, he was selfish and treacherous. One day he told Manikundala, "Look here, my dear friend, now we have grown

up to be young men. This is the time when we should enjoy the good things of life. Come on, let us go out into the wide world and have a nice time."

At first Manikundala was not willing to do as Gautama desired. But he did not want to hurt his friend's sentiment. One fine morning both of them went out of their small town and began their wandering. Needless to say, Manikundala, being rich, carried a good amount of money with him, while Gautama had nothing to carry.

One evening they came to a city which was famous for provisions for merrymaking. Gautama wanted to visit a tavern

where they could indulge in drinking wine and other kinds of pleasures. But that would mean spending money which alone his friend could do. So Gautama proposed, "Let us go to the tavern and do what other wealthy youths are doing there. That should prove a pleasant experience."

"No, my friend," said Manikundala, "I know what happens at such places. Since we have come out of our homes, even without the sanction of our parents, let us visit some holy places which would give us religious benefit."

"You are speaking like a fool. Those who devote themselves to religion and things like that, they only suffer," retorted Gautama.

"Whatever you might think of me, my brother, I will not waver from what I think to be the path of truth. That alone will give me happiness," said Manikundala.

"Your path of truth will only bring us pain and suffering," insisted Gautama and added, "Let us ask some grown-up people who can tell us what we should do; but on condition that if they support my opinion, you will forfeit to me whatever

wealth you have and if they support your opinion, I will forfeit to you whatever wealth I have."

Manikundala agreed to this.

They walked up to a group of people who sat under a tree. Manikundala asked them, "Gentlemen, you are grown-up and experienced. Tell us, will not the path of truth make us really happy?"

"No, young men, we see that people who adhere to the path of truth suffer much. On the other hand people who do not care what they did was just or unjust, prosper much," answered the elderly men.

Immediately Gautama snatched away Manikundala's bag and shouted, "Now, you fool, you must admit that what I said was true!"

"No, I still believe in what I said. It is the path of truth that gives us real happiness," said Manikundala calmly.

This infuriated Gautama so much that he brought out a knife and dug out his friend's eyes and retorted, "Know now for yourself, how even advocating the path of truth you have lost your wealth and your eyes. Be sure, I am going to have a merry time!"



Gautama left his helpless friend there and went towards a house of ill-repute.

It was on the bank of the river Ganga that Manikundala had been left. He sat down bemoaning his luck and was mentally prepared to die.

That was an auspicious day. As soon as the day was over and the moon rose, he could hear some footsteps approaching him. Not far from the spot was situated the temple of Lord Yogeshwara. Vibhisana, who had become the king of Lanka after Ravana's death in the hands of Rama, had come there for a dip in the Ganga and to offer his worship to the deity.

Vibhisana, on inquiry, heard the story of Manikundala. He knew that during the Rama-Ravana war Hanuman had once uprooted a mountain full of medicinal herbs and had carried it to Rama's camp. Afterwards he had carried it back to its original place. But while being carried, a chunk of the mountain had fallen down somewhere in this area. Vibhisana was able to discover the chunk along with a particular plant which could restore lost limbs to man.

He treated Manikundala with a twig of the plant. Consequently Manikundala got back his lost vision.

Thereafter Manikundala paid his gratitude to Vibhisana, bathed in the Ganga and offered worship to Lord Yogeshwara. With a twig of the medicinal plant, he then resumed his wandering.

He had not gone far when he heard an announcement that the princess had lost her sight and that the king would be happy to give her in marriage with anybody who could restore her sight. Manikundala straight proceeded to the palace and cured the princess with the twig. The king, queen and the princess were very happy, more because Manikundala was found to be a young man who should make a nice son-in-law.

In due course Manikundala married the princess and, after

the King's death succeeded to his throne as he had no son.

Years later, while returning from an expedition, Manikundala saw a forlorn Brahmin on the road who had grown untimely old. Although the Brahmin could not recognise the young king, Manikundala had no difficulty in recognising in the beggarly man his old friend, Gautama.

The magnanimous Manikundala made Gautama take dips in the holy Ganga and gave him a job in the temple of Yogeshwara.

It was because Manikundala had got back his lost vision before the temple that the place became known as Chakshu-teertha or the Holy Place of Vision.





The Builders of India's Heritage

KAPILA-The First Rationalist

Thousands of years ago, there was a mighty king named Sagara. "Gara" meant poison. His name suggested that he had been born with poison. The fact is, before he was born, his mother, Yadavi, the queen of King Bahu, had been treated to poison by her enemy so that she would die or at least the child she carried in her womb would be destroyed. But neither Queen Yadavi nor the

child died.

In the meanwhile King Bahu was deprived of his kingdom by his enemies and made his escape into a forest. Sagara was born inside the forest. He grew up to be a powerful youth and recaptured his father's kingdom.

Sagara had two wives. One of them gave birth to a worthy son named Asamanja. But of the other was born a strange

In preparing this series, we are consulting several sources, old and new. We are particularly grateful to a learned scholar, Shri T. Ramalingeswara Rao, for his valuable help behind some of the articles.

—Editor,

ball. Out of the ball, in course of time, came out sixty thousand sons. Unlike their brother Asamanja, they were restless and rash.

When at the height of his eminence, King Sagara desired to perform for the hundredth time the great fire-rite, *Aswamedha Yajna*. In the holy fire was to be sacrificed a beautiful horse.

Now, it so happened that Indra, the king of heaven, became panicky at the glory and powers of Sagara. If Sagara completed the great *Yajna*, he would perhaps claim the throne of heaven—thought Indra. In order to foil the *Yajna*, he stole the sacred horse kept ready for sacrifice.

But where on earth could Indra hide the horse? Indeed, there was no spot on earth which Sagara's reckless sons could not reach. But deep beneath the surface of the earth, in *Patala*, lived a rishi in solitude, where perhaps nobody could reach.

Indra drove the horse stealthily into the rishi's ashram and left it there.

When King Sagara was informed of the theft he was furious. He ordered his sixty thousand sons to go out and recover the horse.

The sixty thousand sons spread like mighty waves of the sea—in various directions. But nowhere was the horse to be found. At last they dug their



way into *Patala*—and lo! there was the sacred horse, wandering about!

Not far from the horse sat the rishi, engrossed in meditation. The sons of Sagara concluded that the rishi was the thief. They rushed at him to kill him.

The rishi, without any sign of feeling disturbed, just opened his eyes. A miraculous fire darted from his eyes and instantly reduced the sixty thousand young men to ashes!

Kapila was the name of this mighty rishi. He had built his ashram in that nether region so that he was not disturbed in his meditation. He was also in the process of formulating some highly original ideas about the

creation.

When King Sagara knew about the fate of his sixty thousand sons, he asked his grandson Ansuman (the son of Asamanja) to go and rescue the horse. Ansuman succeeded in pleasing Kapila and returned with the horse. The *Yajna* was duly performed.

But the sixty thousand sons came back to life long afterwards, when Ansuman's grandson, Bhagiratha, brought the Ganga down from heaven to earth and the river entered the *Patala* and submerged the ashes.

Kapila was one of the greatest rishis of India. He is the first rationalist philosopher. He gives us a system of thought with which to understand the



phenomena of the life and the world. A rationalist is he who tries to prove or disprove something by the help of reason. Many would of course say that the mystery of the creation was too great a thing to be understood by reason. True. Does that not prove that a mind who tried to explain it through reason was a daring mind?

Kapila's system of philosophy, known as the *Samkhya*, is perhaps the oldest of the major systems of Indian philosophy. According to this, there are two basic factors behind this creation, the *Purusha*, the nearest English rendering of which is Spirit, and the *Prakriti*, or the material manifestation.

Both are eternal. One does not come out of the other.

The *Purusha* is devoid of desire. The *Prakriti* is devoid of consciousness. But together they are responsible for this creation.

Scholars agree that the *Samkhya* is the earliest attempt at giving an account of the world through intelligence. And the *Samkhya* has influenced all the rational schools of thought which developed afterwards anywhere in the world. It is significant that while speaking about the mysteries of the creation, Kapila does not speak of God. Indeed, the ancient rishis of India were highly original and daring in their quest.

WONDER WITH COLOURS





Why The Bandit Turned into Stone

King Vikram braved the sharp wind and the intermittent rain and returned to the tree. Without any hesitation he climbed it again and brought down the corpse. Laying the corpse across his shoulder, the king began to walk through the fearful cremation ground. Jackals howled and weird laughter of spirits greeted him from all around.

The king had gone only a few steps when the vampire which possessed the corpse said, "O King, I do not understand with what motive you are making this unusual efforts. A little error might foil the success of one's endeavour all on a sudden. Listen to the story of Rangesh so that you can realise the truth of what I say.

*New Tales of King Vikram
and the Vampire*



The vampire went on: In a dense forest near the city of Rangpur lived a bandit-leader. His only son, Rangesh, was a boy of sharp mind and great physical vigour.

Rangesh had to accompany his father on the latter's plundering expeditions when he was barely fourteen. No wonder that he should grow into an expert bandit soon. After his father's death, he naturally became the leader of the bandits and managed the gang well.

When Rangesh was a small boy he had once paid a visit to a festival in Rangpur. In front of a temple a scholar was explaining the teachings of the

Gita to a group of devotees. Rangesh had sat down for a while. With rapt attention he listened to the words of the scholar who said, "If a man did his work sincerely, whatever it is, and did not mind the result; if he practised not to be elated at success or depressed at failure, he is following the way to God. With his faith in God, he will be protected by Him."

Rangesh never forgot this message. He had inherited the profession of banditry from his father. He provided good leadership to the gang, divided the booty among them with justice and never felt elated at success or sad at failure. His faith in God was deep.

Days passed. The king's army once made a thorough combing of the forest in order to capture the gang. The bandits dispersed in different directions. Rangesh too fled the forest.

He rode on for the whole day and the night. He entered another forest the next day. He felt extremely thirsty. But he found no water nearby. However, his eyes fell on a mendicant who was lost in deep meditation. Rangesh patted him on

his back and said, "Holy man! Can you give me a little water to drink?"

The mendicant was furious at the bandit's conduct. He cursed him, saying, "Turn into stone!"

But his curse produced no effect on Rangesh who pleaded with him, "Will you please give me some water first?"

The mendicant was greatly surprised to see his curse going in vain. He concluded that the stranger must be a greater soul than himself. He fetched water and Rangesh quenched his thirst.

Rangesh then apologised to the mendicant for disturbing him and left the place.

Before long Rangesh gathered his scattered followers and reorganised his gang. The king's soldiers and spies were after him again. But Rangesh knew how to steer clear of their net.

Rangesh had a son. It was on the occasion of the son's marriage that he slackened his vigil against the king's spies. At midnight, when the bandits were feasting, the king's army swooped down upon them. All, including Rangesh's son and daughter-in-law, were captured. But Rangesh escaped.

The king could not be at peace until Rangesh had been arrested. He made an announcement to the effect that



unless Rangesh surrendered within a week, his son and daughter-in-law would be beheaded.

Rangesh failed to hear the announcement in time. It was only on the eighth day that the news reached him. He rushed to the city. But he had been late. In front of the huge fort where prisoners were interned he saw hanging the heads of his son and daughter-in-law.

He cried out with acute agony, "What an injustice has been done! What a sinner is the king to kill innocent people!"

No sooner had he said this than he turned into stone!

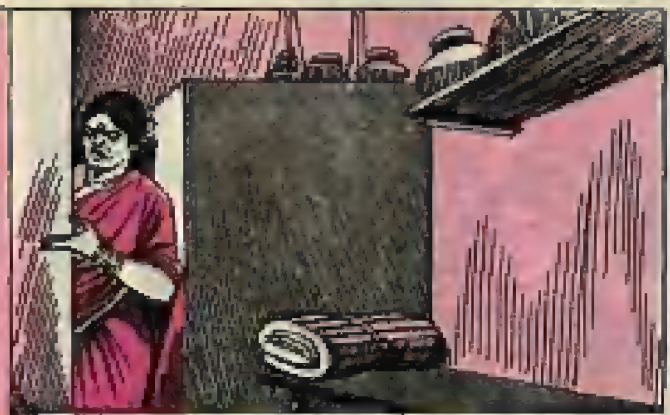
The vampire kept quiet for a while and then asked King Vikram, "Tell me, O King, how is it that Rangesh upon whom the mendicant's curse had produced no effect turned stone suddenly now? If you know

the answer and yet choose to keep mum, your head would be shattered to pieces."

Answered the king, "The mendicant's curse had no immediate effect on Rangesh because he was protected by his faith in God. He had no anxiety for his plight and no bad will for anybody. But when he saw his son and daughter-in-law beheaded, his faith was shattered. Whether the king was a sinner or not is another matter. But so far as Rangesh was concerned, with his faith in God gone, the powerful curse of the mendicant at once became effective on him. Hence he turned into stone."

As soon as the king finished his answer the corpse, possessed by the vampire, gave him the slip. The king sighed, but turned towards the tree again.





THE LAST ADVICE

Ram Shastri was a Brahmin priest and a fine scholar in astrology. He could read horoscopes efficiently. He was, naturally, in great demand by the people of his area.

Being a kind-hearted man, Ram Shastri often worked for the poor without remuneration or only with a token reward. His wife, Suguna, did not like this attitude of her husband. She desired him to earn more and keep some wealth for the future. But Ram Shastri said, "Our three daughters are our true wealth. We do not have to hoard money for our future security if these girls grow up as dutiful and truthful ladies.

If these girls knew how to be dutiful, then they would give us love and attention which can never be bought by any amount of wealth."

Ram Shastri had studied the horoscopes of his daughters and had named them according to the luck and qualities with which they were born. The eldest one had been named Lakshmi—after the goddess of wealth—for Ram Shastri found that there was much wealth in her destiny. He named the second one Kalavati—one who was endowed with artistic qualities. Dhirmati—which meant calm and patient by nature—was the name Ram Shastri gave to his

A country is a family of many millions of families
—Indira Gandhi



youngest daughter. All the three daughters were graceful and the Brahmin couples brought them up with due attention. The neighbours were full of praise for them. Ram Shastri and his wife Suguna were happy.

As the girls grew up it became evident that Ram Shastri's reading of their nature was correct.

Lakshmi married a wealthy man. Kalavati, who proved her exceptional talent in song and dance from a very early age, soon attracted the attention of a young man who was a lover of arts and they married. With Kalavati's arrival at her husband's house, the house be-

came a centre of artistic activities. Her husband organised an opera party with Kalavati's inspiration. All the finest actors of the region joined them. The opera party proved very popular. This meant more work for Kalavati. But she did not mind it. By and by the party began to make a good profit.

However, it was not easy to find a bridegroom for Dhirmati. Ram Shastri searched for quite some time and finally arranged her marriage with a young priest of the neighbouring village who was not rich. Suguna did not consider the bridegroom to be the right match for her daughter, but Dhirmati herself said, "If I can manage my household wisely, I can do without riches. If I cannot manage things wisely, riches would hardly help. In any case, I believe in destiny. Let whatever is ordained come to pass."

Ram Shastri fell sick soon after the youngest daughter was married. He felt that he was not going to live long. The message of his serious illness was sent to all the three daughters. Dhirmati rushed to her parents' house immediately. But Lakshmi and Kalavati did not turn up. Both of them of

course sent their friends or servants from time to time seeking to know the latest developments about their father's health.

Observing that her husband looked sad on account of the conduct of the two elder daughters, Suguna said, "We must be practical in considering the situation. It is not easy for Lakshmi to come out of her home. There is a big business and she shoulders a heap of burdens. Same is the case with Kalavati. Her house is a shelter for dancers, musicians and actors. How can she easily free herself from her commitments

to them?"

Ram Shastri did not give out his reactions to his wife's explanation. But he did not seem satisfied. He seemed thoughtful and kept on asking from time to time whether the elder daughters arrived or not. He only sighed each time the answer was in the negative.

As days passed, Ram Shastri's condition deteriorated. At last his elder daughters arrived with basketfuls of fruits. Moreover, Lakshmi had brought with her a famous physician. Suguna was very happy. But Ram Shastri did not seem impressed.





One evening Ram Shastri called his wife near him and whispered to her, "After I am gone, you should go and live with Dhirmati."

But Suguna frowned at the suggestion and retorted, "How do you say so? Lakshmi is so wealthy; Kalavati's house is always open even for strangers. Can't I find shelter with any of them? Dhirmati is a poor man's wife. How can she maintain me? Why should I go to prove myself an extra burden to her?"

Ram Shastri kept quiet. A little later he called his daughters to his bedside and said in a faint voice, "Take charge

of your mother." Before the daughters could say anything, he closed his eyes, never to open them again.

Ram Shastri's funeral was duly performed. Each one of the daughters now pleaded with Suguna to accompany her. Suguna chose to go with the eldest daughter, Lakshmi.

At Lakshmi's house Suguna was warmly received. Suguna had nothing to do. She relaxed and passed her time idly. But after a few weeks she felt that there were people in the family who did not like her passing time in that way. One day Lakshmi's mother-in-law told Lakshmi, "Listen, my daughter, I am as old and tired as your mother. Both my husband and my son are the earning members of the family. Why should I toil at this old age? Have I not laboured enough all these years? From today you should take care of me just as you take care of your mother who does no work!"

The obstinate mother-in-law truly stopped doing any work. That only meant more work for Lakshmi. She felt tired. She was obliged to allot portions of her works to her mother.

Suguna felt embarrassed. But

she did not murmur. Gradually, more and more works came to her. She was old and tired. Besides, her husband's death had left her depressed. Soon she found herself incapable of doing any more hard work. One day she told Lakshmi, "My daughter, there was a time when I could work continuously. Although I would love to work even now, I could not go on at this rate. In fact, I am working harder than your maid-servants. Should I do so, since, after all, I am a guest?"

"Mother! How do you look upon yourself as a guest? Does a guest stay on permanently? I am sorry for your attitude. All I can say is, if you feel unhappy here, I won't mind if you leave me and go to stay with any of your other two daughters," said Lakshmi.

Suguna did not feel like staying there even for a moment more. She left for Kalavati's house.

Kalavati seemed quite happy to see her mother. She introduced her to several artistes and took good care of her. The next day Suguna narrated to Kalavati her humiliation at Lakshmi's house. Feeling very



sad, Kalavati told Suguna, "Mother! You did a nice thing by coming away. Live here happily forever. You will be required to do no work here."

Days passed. Soon Suguna began feeling uncomfortable at Kalavati's house. It was a place where all sorts of people gathered. They were lovers of dance, drama and other arts and they did not care for social norms and customs. For example, a man of higher caste did not mind sharing his food with a man of lower caste. Often they discussed, laughed and sang till late in the night. Suguna was quite orthodox in

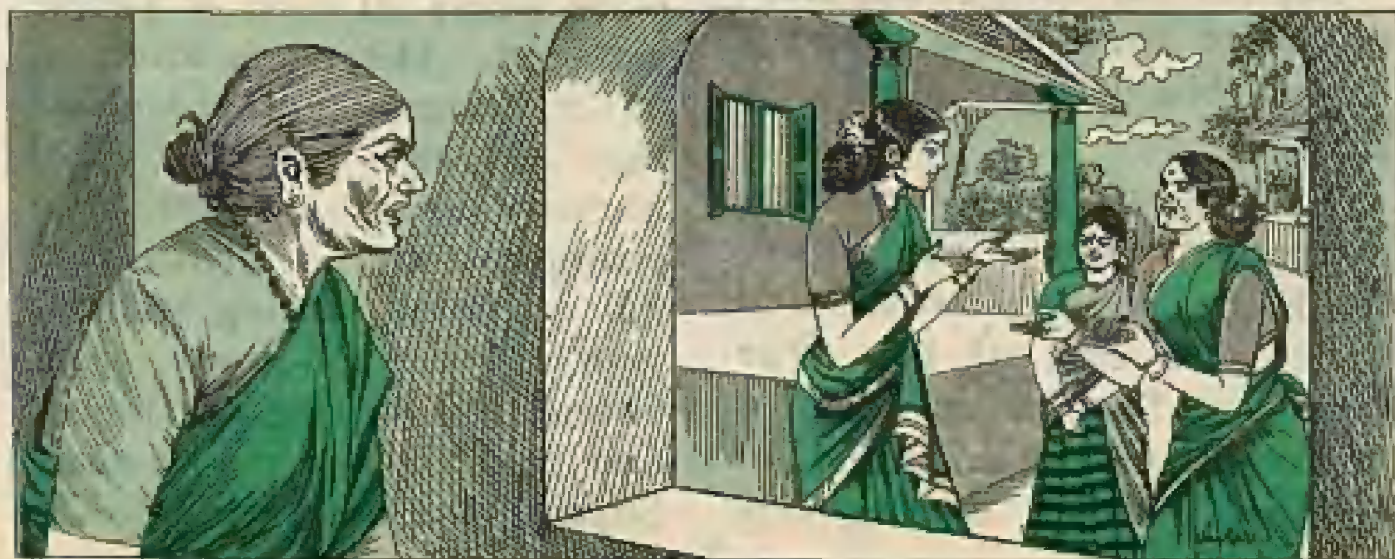
her outlook. One day she told Kalavati, "My daughter! Your friends appear to me quite unmannerly. You should stop entertaining them so frequently. Yours is a home and not a club. What I cannot tolerate is your friends entering the kitchen freely and partaking of the food-stuffs themselves. How can I eat from the same kitchen?"

Kalavati smiled sadly and said, "Mother! I understand your difficulties. But we are basically artistes. Art is all for us. We do not believe in castes and things like that. I cannot ask my friends to change their behaviour. They won't understand. Well, mother, if you find your life hard here, I would rather advise you to live with Dhirmati, although I will miss you so much!"

Suguna soon reached Dhirmati's house. Dhirmati was delighted. She embraced her and said, "My dear mother, all your life you have worked hard. Now is the time for you to be at complete rest. I will look after you as a mother looks after her little daughter."

Tears rolled down Suguna's cheeks. Soon she was surprised to see how cleverly and wisely Dhirmati managed her household with her meagre means. Dhirmati, for her sweet nature, was dear to all the neighbours. She, like her father, helped all. Consequently all were eager to be of some service to her.

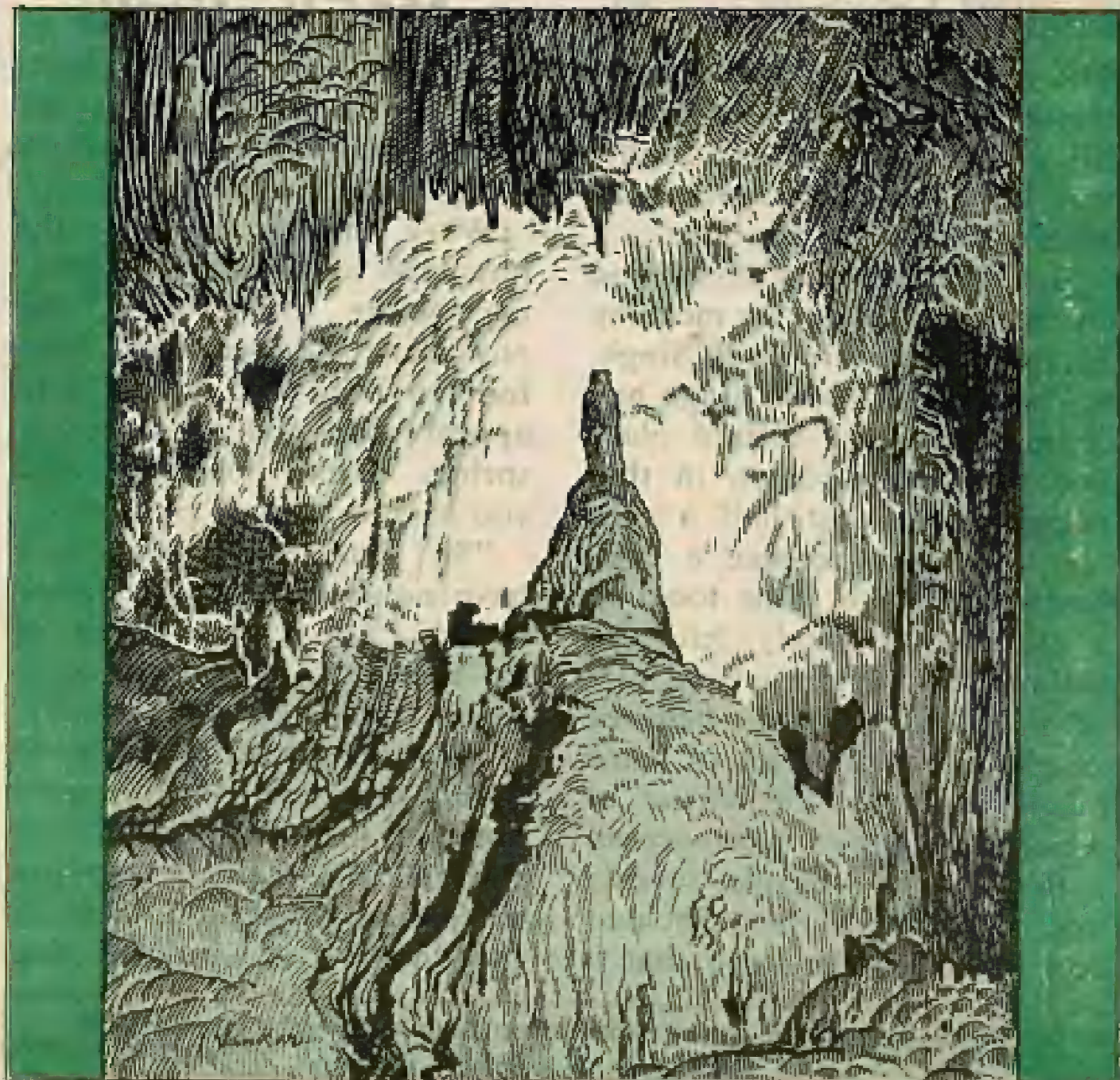
Suguna now remembered her husband's last advice. She realised how wise and far-sighted he was. She lived peacefully with Dhirmati till her death.

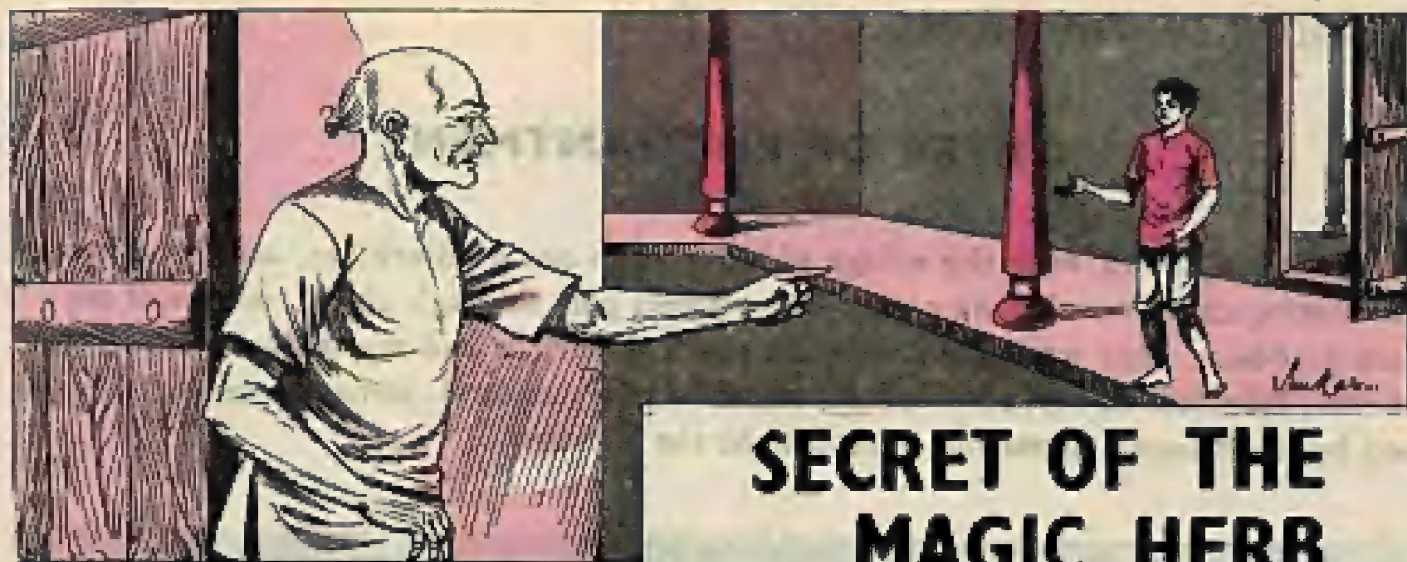


WONDER OF THE WORLD:

CAVES OF ENCHANTMENT

Deep underground, near the village of Novy Afon on the Black Sea, are to be found fascinating caves numbering nine. As visitors pass through them, scenes of fairy-tale grandeur, blue waters, snow-white stone waterfalls and mysterious music greet them. Needless to say, some of the attractions are natural, some are carefully devised by the Russian Government to delight the visitors.





SECRET OF THE MAGIC HERB

The young Shekhar had nobody in the world as his own except his old granny. He, naturally, was quite bewildered when the granny died all of a sudden.

But Shekhar was smart and enterprising. One fine morning he appeared before Bodh Singh, the physician. Bodh Singh had come from some distant place and had settled down in that village for almost half a century. He had become a celebrated name, for, if he took up a patient, he rarely left him without completely curing him of his disease. People believed that he knew the secret of some magic herb by the virtue of which he achieved such success.

Bodh Singh was over seventy and he lived alone. Shekhar met him with the hope that if

he could please the old physician and learn all about the magic herb, he could earn a comfortable livelihood.

When Shekhar bowed to the physician and remained standing before him quietly, the physician surveyed him from foot to head and said, "You appear as sound as a tree in spring. What business could you have with me?"

"Sir! I am ill in mind as I have nowhere to go, no work to do. You can cure me of my ailment by giving me some work," replied Shekhar humbly.

"But there is hardly any work which you can do for me!" observed the old physician.

"Well, Sir, Can't I help you in cooking your food, cleaning the house or —er—gathering

It is wrong, it is sinful, to consider some people lower than ourselves
—Mahatma Gandhi

medicinal herbs for you from the forest?" suggested Shekhar.

Bodh Singh gazed at Shekhar and said, "Very well, boy, take care of the house. Don't bother about gathering herbs!"

Shekhar did not lose patience. He stuck on to the old man and did all the household chores. Soon the old man began liking him and depending on him for everything. But when it came to going to the forest in search of medicinal herbs, the old man must do it himself. He even would not like Shekhar to be present near him when he prepared medicines.

Several months passed. One day Shekhar told the physician, "Sir! If you pardon me, I have a suggestion to make. You are supposed to know the secret of some magic herb. Since you are getting old and are likely to leave for the heaven before long, shouldn't you pass on the secret to me? Otherwise, along with you, the secret too would be buried forever!"

"Ha ha!" laughed the physician and said, "Who told you that I was going to die soon? Do I look sick or exhausted?"

"No, of course not," said Shekhar and he did not raise the question of the secret herb



any more. A year passed during which both Shekhar and the physician grew quite fond of each other. Shekhar came to address the physician as Grandpa.

Then the physician suddenly fell sick. Shekhar was very much worried. He told the old man, "Grandpa! Please do not forget to treat yourself with the magic herb!"

The physician gave out a cheerless smile and said, "Sonny! No herb is going to cure me. I know the signs of approaching death. I have no doubt that I am dying."

Shekhar stood speechless, his

eyes filled with tears. Said the old man again, "Would you now like to learn the secret of the magic herb?"

"No hurry about it, Grandpa. Get well first and then we will talk about it," replied Shekhar wiping his eyes.

"There would hardly be any time for that, sonny. Know this much that in that box yonder lies the secret of the magic herb, written on a sheet of palm leaf. Read it after I am gone," said the physician. And he died soon thereafter.

Shekhar wept much. Then he busied himself in performing the last rites of the physician, with the full cooperation of the villagers. When all was over, he opened the box and found the palm leaf. He read what was written on it: "Shekhar! I spent my boyhood learning the

science of medicine. Thereafter I put my learning into practice with devotion and sincerity. As a result I could cure people of their diseases successfully. This success created the impression that I knew the secret of some magic herb. I did not like to dispel the impression, for, this faith of the people helped them in getting cured quickly. In other words, the secret of the magic herb was the faith of the people."

But the palm leaf contained yet another passage which said: "As a mark of my love for you, I bestow upon you half of my wealth, which is buried under this floor. The other half will be spent for the development of the village. My will is with the village committee. Use your portion of the wealth wisely and live happily."



THE GHOST'S ORCHARD

Jeevan Das owned a lemon orchard which was regularly plundered at night by thieves.

Jeevan had a friend named Vinod, who was good at acting. In order to remove his friend's agony, he disguised himself as a ghost and hid in the orchard. The trick worked. The thieves were terrified to see the 'ghost' and the orchard was plundered no more. It became known as the Ghost's Orchard!

Encouraged by this, Jeevan borrowed a fat lot of money and invested it in the orchard. The result was excellent. But before the fruits matured, a cyclone wrought havoc in the orchard and the fruits were entirely spoilt. But Jeevan had to pay back the loan. He decided to sell away the orchard. But who would come forward to buy the Ghost's Orchard? There was only one man besides Jeevan who knew that the orchard had really no ghost in it. He was Vinod. Jeevan was at last obliged to sell it to Vinod at a small price, for, Vinod was not a wealthy man after all!





Daring Escape From The Chambal Forest

Who has not heard of Chambal in Uttar Pradesh—the wide hilly area infested with dacoits?

Among the dacoit chiefs was Sher Singh, a terror to the people. He was cruel and knew no mercy. His followers were in no way different from him.

They were swift as wind. When pursued by the police, they would escape into the forest and hide at different places. While it was difficult for the police to run about inside the forest, the members of Sher Singh's gang could easily hide and harass the police.

Sher Singh had imposed strict discipline on his gang. Nobody could disobey him. If one did,

he met his death. And he met his death in a peculiar way: a sword dipped in poison was thrust into his tummy. That meant instant death.

Sher Singh and his gang lived in caves and ravines in an inaccessible region of the forest. They would gallop into villages and bazars and plunder them swiftly and return into their rocky abode. They would then enjoy their loot and plan out their next expedition.

Sher Singh was once a policeman himself. While he was serving at a distant place, news reached him that his house had been burnt down. He rushed back to his village and

saw the deadbodies of his wife and the second son who had sustained grievous burn injuries. Luckily, his elder son had escaped harm, being away. Sher Singh came to know that the fire was not accidental. It was the local landlord who had done the mischief due to some old grudge against him.

Sher Singh marched to the landlord's house forthwith and shot him dead. But after doing that he was beset with the fear of being arrested and punished. So he escaped into the forest. The police declared that whoever could capture Sher Singh or could give clue leading to his arrest, would be suitably rewarded.

He passed a few days inside the forest, almost starving. Then one day he was found by the men of an infamous dacoit, Shankar.

He was captured and produced before Shankar. Shankar who had seen his picture in police handouts recognised him as the murderer wanted by the police and induced him to join his gang.

It was impossible to live in the forest all by himself. Going out of the forest meant falling into the hands of the police.



Sher Singh saw that the only course open before him was to put up with Shankar's demand.

Sher Singh soon proved his efficiency. He became Shankar's chief lieutenant. After Shankar died in an encounter with the police, Sher Singh became the new leader of the gang. He gave his gang even more strenuous training and it earned the reputation of being the most ferocious gang in Chambal.

Sher Singh's elder son, Ajit, was being brought up at his maternal uncle's house. One day Sher Singh arrived there and expressed his desire to take the son away with him. Al-



though nobody liked his idea, none dared to protest.

Thus, Ajit was brought into the forest and was given the needed training which would make him eligible to become a member of the gang.

Ajit quietly followed his father's instructions and practised whatever he was taught. At first Sher Singh was satisfied that his son would prove his worthy successor in the future. But Ajit was found to be a boy of quite different nature. He proved himself an excellent marksman, but he was too gentle to kill any human being. Sher Singh took him along with the

gang on some expeditions. Several times he gave Ajit the chance to shoot at people. But each time Ajit seemed to miss his target. Sher Singh did not know that Ajit was taking wrong aim deliberately.

A police party once entered the forest and camped near the hideout of Sher Singh. At Sher Singh's order his gang, led by Ajit, pounced upon the police party when it was quite unprepared and routed it. A number of policemen were killed, while only two dacoits fell to the police party's bullets.

The leader of the police party, a senior officer, was captured by the dacoits.

Ajit, who led the raid on the police, was told by one of the dacoits, "Sir! Let us present the prisoner before our leader so that he can have the satisfaction of killing the fellow himself."

"It is not safe to keep the officer alive so long. I will finish him myself," announced Ajit as he started dragging the officer away towards a ditch. The officer struggled to free himself, but in vain.

Inside the ditch Ajit whispered to the officer, "Do not fear. I am not going to kill you.

In fact, I have never killed a human being."

"Your words sound funny. You are a member of Sher Singh's gang which is notorious for bloodshed. Yet you say that you have never killed a man. How to believe you?" asked the officer.

"There is no time for argument. I am going to shoot over your head. You give out a shriek and fall flat on the ground with your face down. I will sprinkle blood on your back to suggest that you had fallen dead to my bullet. After we depart, you can leave the forest. And know this that I am a dacoit under the pressure of circumstance, not by my own choice," said Ajit.

Thereafter Ajit cut his own thigh and sprinkled a little blood on the officer's back. Then he shot at a tree. The officer shrieked and sprawled on the ground pretending to be dead.

Ajit climbed out of the ditch and led his men back to the hideout. While passing by the ditch, all looked at the officer and concluded that he was dead. One of them gazed at Ajit's thigh and asked why he bled. Ajit replied, "The officer snatched away my own dagger and

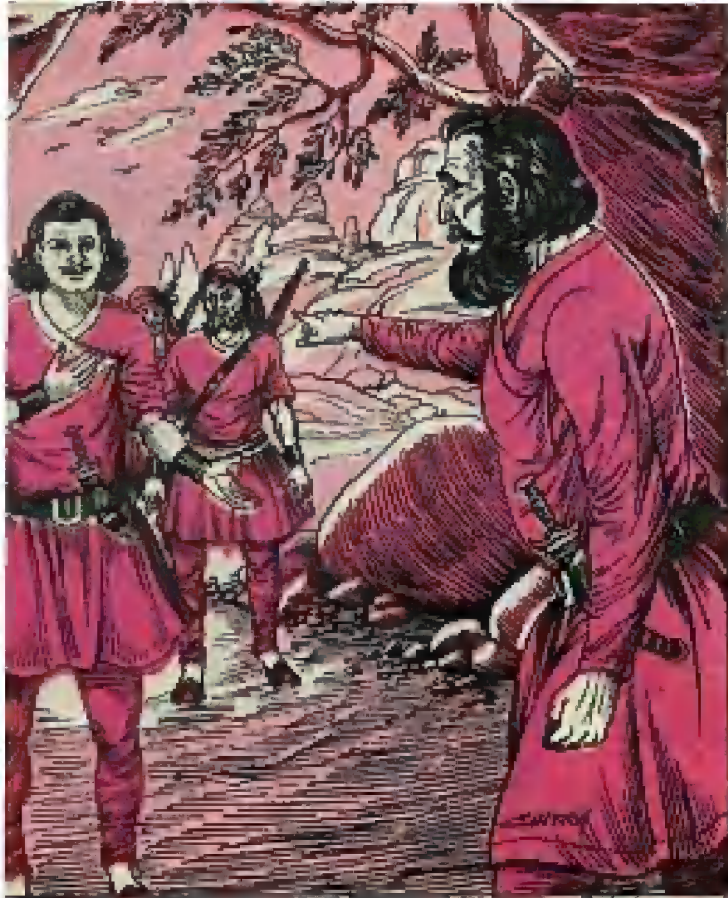


tried to stab me. However, the wound is superficial. Nothing to worry about it."

"Master! Your son Ajit let the police officer who had been captured by our men this morning escape unhurt," reported the spy to Sher Singh.

"Don't speak nonsense. Ajit killed the officer, I'm sure," growled Sher Singh.

"Master! I can't disbelieve my own eyes. I saw from my hiding how Ajit sprinkled the officer's back with his own blood and fired a shot at the tree-top. The officer lay quiet for half an hour and ran away later," said the spy.



Ajit was summoned to Sher Singh's presence. Before the elders of the gang, Sher Singh told him what he had heard from his spy and demanded, "Is this true?"

"True, father!" replied Ajit fixing his gaze on the ground.

His answer came like a bolt from the blue. All kept mum. Suddenly Ajit cried out, "Father! Please let me return to my uncle's house. I can never kill a man, nor can I hand over a man to you knowing well what you would do to him. That is why I let the officer go!"

Sher Singh looked at his colleagues and asked, "What

should we do to this renegade? No favour need be shown to him because he is my son."

The elders of the gang wanted time to decide on the issue. Ajit was thrown into a cave for the time being.

Jaspal was the name of Sher Singh's cook. He belonged to the same village where Ajit had been brought up. He loved Ajit very much. In fact, it was he who had looked after Ajit inside the forest. Ajit had grown up to be a nice young man under his continuous care.

He could guess the punishment that awaited Ajit. Like all those who disobeyed the leader or betrayed the gang, Ajit too would be killed by a sword that would pierce his abdomen!

"This must not be!" Jaspal told himself, "I must try to save Ajit even if that would mean risking my own life!"

A brilliant idea came to him in a flash. In his early youth he served as an assistant to a magician. A prize item in the magician's show was to push a sword into a man's tummy with such vigour that the pointed end of the sword was seen emerging at the back of the man. Even then the man did

not show any sign of pain!

Jaspal remembered how this was possible. What was needed was a metal sheath of the form of a sickle. It was to cover half of the man's waist, from the navel to the spine at the back and was to be put on under the dress. The sword to be used must be supple and thin. The pointed tip of the sword, through an opening in the dress, was to be pressed on the mouth of the sheath and pushed. The supple sword would bend and pass through the sheath. But when it would emerge through the rear end of the sheath, it would create the illusion as if it had pierced through the man straight! And if some red liquid could be stored in the sheath, closing its mouths with wax, then blood would seem to be flowing at both the ends.

Jaspal met the gang's blacksmith privately. It was the blacksmith's job to prepare swords and other weapons for the gang. When the dacoits used to go out of the forest, only Jaspal and the blacksmith were left and consequently they had become close friends.

According to Jaspal's advice, the blacksmith prepared the sheath and the special thin



sword. At night Jaspal entered Ajit's cave, telling the guards that he was carrying food for him. Ajit put on the sheath. Jaspal had already filled the sheath with a fowl's blood.

Next day, early in the morning, the elders of the gang returned their verdict: Ajit must die!

Sher Singh said, "Then let him die in the usual manner in which a renegade dies!"

"Spare him, master, please spare him," cried Jaspal.

"That is out of the question," replied Sher Singh grimly.

"In that case let Ajit die in my hands, the very hands that

had brought him up. Then you must allow me to carry his deadbody to his uncle's house so that his last rites can be performed properly," appealed Jaspal.

"I have no objection to your proposals. But Ajit must approve of them," said Sher Singh in a choked voice.

"Father! I give my consent to Jaspal's proposals," said Ajit.

Ajit then stood before Jaspal, his head held high and arms crossed on his chest. Jaspal dipped his sword in a cauldron that contained poison. Then, shouting out a melancholy cry, he put the tip of the sword on Ajit's tummy and gave a thrust to it. The tip of the sword was seen emerging on the opposite side. Ajit fell down and appeared still as a corpse. Sher Singh covered his face with

both his hands.

Jaspal drew the sword out of Ajit's body and put it in his own sheath. Then he lifted up Ajit's body and bore it on his shoulder and jumped onto a horse. He had not gone far when he saw a large police party surrounding the area. Jaspal and Ajit got down from the horse and raised their hands in a gesture of surrender.

Thereafter a fierce fight took place between the police and Sher Singh's gang. Sher Singh was killed on the spot, along with several others. The rest were captured.

The officer who had been saved by Ajit now rose to the occasion. On his intervention Ajit and Jaspal were spared.

Ajit is leading the life of a prosperous citizen now. Jaspal is still with him, old though.



A LOAN WITH A DIFFERENCE

A Brahmin scholar of Vijaynagar one day met a famous money-lender and requested him for a loan of fifty rupees. The money-lender agreed to give it on condition that the Brahmin would pay half a rupee as interest every month and pledge something against the amount.

"Here is a pearl necklace which the king presented to me," said the scholar as he handed it over to the money-lender. The money-lender gave a receipt to the scholar and deposited the necklace in his steel safe.

The scholar never failed to pay the monthly interest of half a rupee to the money-lender. Years passed. One day the money-lender asked him, "You have already paid a good amount as interest. Aren't you in a position yet to pay back the loan and release the necklace?"

"To be frank, the necklace costs five thousand rupees. I have no steel safe in my house to keep it securely. Hence I go on paying you half a rupee every month and rest assured of the safety of my valuable property!" replied the scholar.





A VISIT FROM THE GODDESS

In a certain village lived two Brahmins, Raghu Mishra and Prasad Mishra. Raghu was a scholar, but he was not rich. Prasad was rich, but because he was not a scholar he was jealous of Raghu and tried to give him trouble whenever possible.

One afternoon Raghu Mishra's younger sister and her husband came to Raghu's house and told him, "We came by an inn in the bazar where a party of fifty Brahmin pilgrims were resting. On their way to the holy town, they will arrive in this village tonight. They happened to meet Prasad Mishra and asked him if there was any generous man in this village who could give them

food and shelter at night. Prasad Mishra gave them your name!"

Raghu understood that this was yet another mischief done by Prasad to harass him. If the party of Brahmins landed on him, he could not refuse them food and shelter. But that would mean his having to borrow from others, perhaps mortgaging his wife's ornaments. That was not a happy thing to do.

The two couples discussed the problem and decided upon a course of action. By sunset they went out of the house and put a lock on the door. They announced to the neighbours that they were proceeding to a relative's house a few miles away

When minds are closed, they become impervious to reason
—Jawaharlal Nehru

and that they would return only the next day.

But as soon as it was a little dark they re-entered the house through the back door. Then they began cooking with the intention of finishing taking meals and going to sleep early. "When the pilgrim's party would arrive, they would of course be told by our neighbours that we were not at home!" Raghu Mishra mused with a chuckle.

But as the cooking was going on, a neighbour happened to pass by the door. He could hear the clink of utensils and could smell the flavour of food

coming from the interior of the locked up house! Greatly curious, he informed some other passers-by about this curious happening and they collected before the door. They did not make noise lest the mysterious users of Raghu Mishra's house should be scared.

Despite the cautious conduct of the villagers, the inmates could know what was going on outside. Raghu felt greatly embarrassed at the possibility of having to be found out like a thief in his own house. However, his sister and brother-in-law whispered something to each other and both went and stood



near the door. Raghu and his wife waited to see what they would do.

Suddenly Raghu's brother-in-law said in a dramatic tone, "So, Lakshmi, my dear consort, you are here! I am looking for you for last one hour in all the nooks and corner of heaven!"

"Pardon me, O my lord, Narayana! I had to rush here as a party of Brahmin pilgrims were expected here. As you know, Raghu Mishra is rather poor. How could he entertain the Brahmins without my help?" said Raghu's sister.

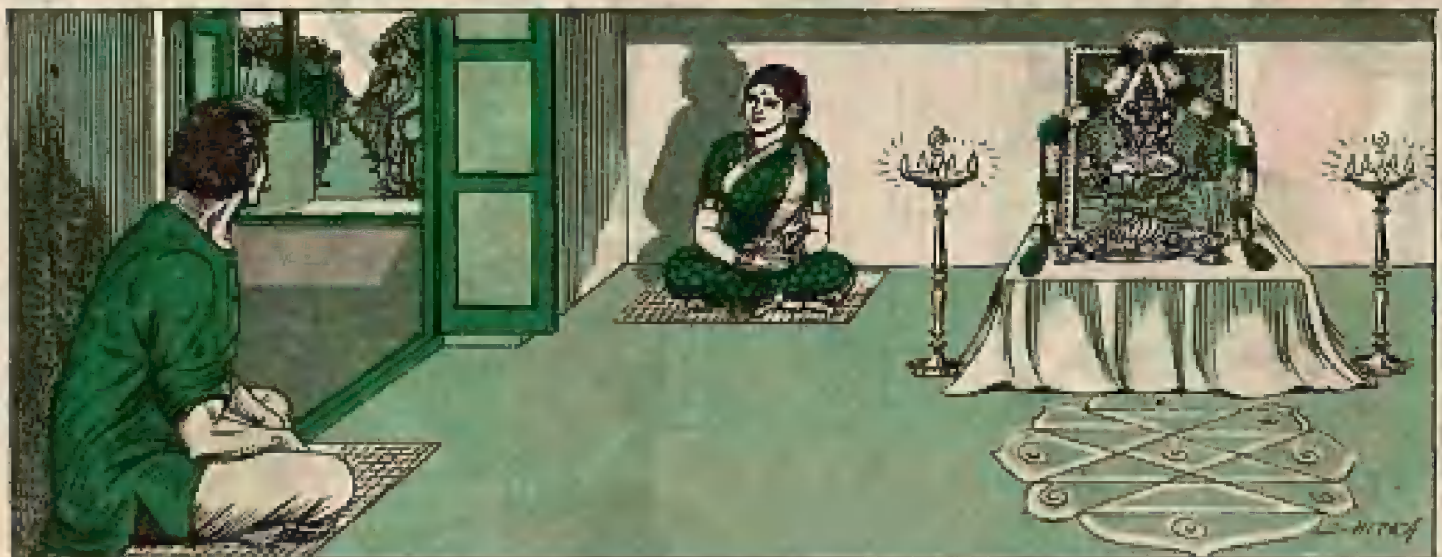
"Great indeed is your compassion, O Lakshmi, Goddess of wealth! But since Raghu is not at home, the pilgrims are most likely to proceed to Prasad Mishra's house. Should you better not go and dwell there?" said Raghu's brother-

in-law.

"Let it be so. I will go there forthwith!" replied Raghu's sister.

The couple then fell silent. The villagers rushed to Prasad's house. Prasad had just returned. He was amazed to hear what the villagers had to tell him. He and his wife immediately prepared for a special worship of the Goddess Lakshmi. As soon as the pilgrims reached the village, Prasad's servants guided them to his house where they were fed well. Although the villagers who waited outside his house to witness the arrival of Lakshmi failed to see her, it was thought that she must have arrived invisibly.

At the other end of the village Raghu Mishra and his wife and their two guests slept well after a leisurely dinner.





THE VEILED WISDOM

Harish had lost his mother in his infancy. His father died when he was in his twenties. Relatives and well-wishers soon found for him a bride so that he would not feel lonely.

Sushila was the name of the bride. She was very beautiful. That quite pleased Harish. But he wanted to ascertain if her intelligence matched her beauty. After all the marriage rites were over and the guests had departed, he asked her, "Can you imagine the quantity of rice that was spent to feed people on account of the marriage?"

"Certainly, two or three potfuls of it!" replied Sushila.

Harish was furious. "What!" he blurted out, "I exhausted my year's stock of rice to feed

the people to their hearts' content; and now you say that I spent just two or three potfuls of rice! You are nothing but imbecile. What a folly it was on my part to marry you! Get ready. I will leave you at your parents' house. You have no place here."

Quietly Sushila prepared to leave. Soon they were on the road, the haughty Harish leading the way.

While they were walking down a road that passed through cornfields, they saw some carts filled with rice-bags leaving the fields. Sushila observed, "I hope this yield is this year's and not last year's!"

Harish was doubly sure of the foolish nature of his wife.

Breach of promise is a base surrender of truth —*Mahatma Gandhi*

Beyond the cornfields was a cremation ground. They saw some people carrying a dead body. Sushila asked them, "You are carrying one corpse or a hundred?"

Harish now concluded that Sushila was not only stupid, but also mad. "Sooner I get rid of her the better," he murmured to himself.

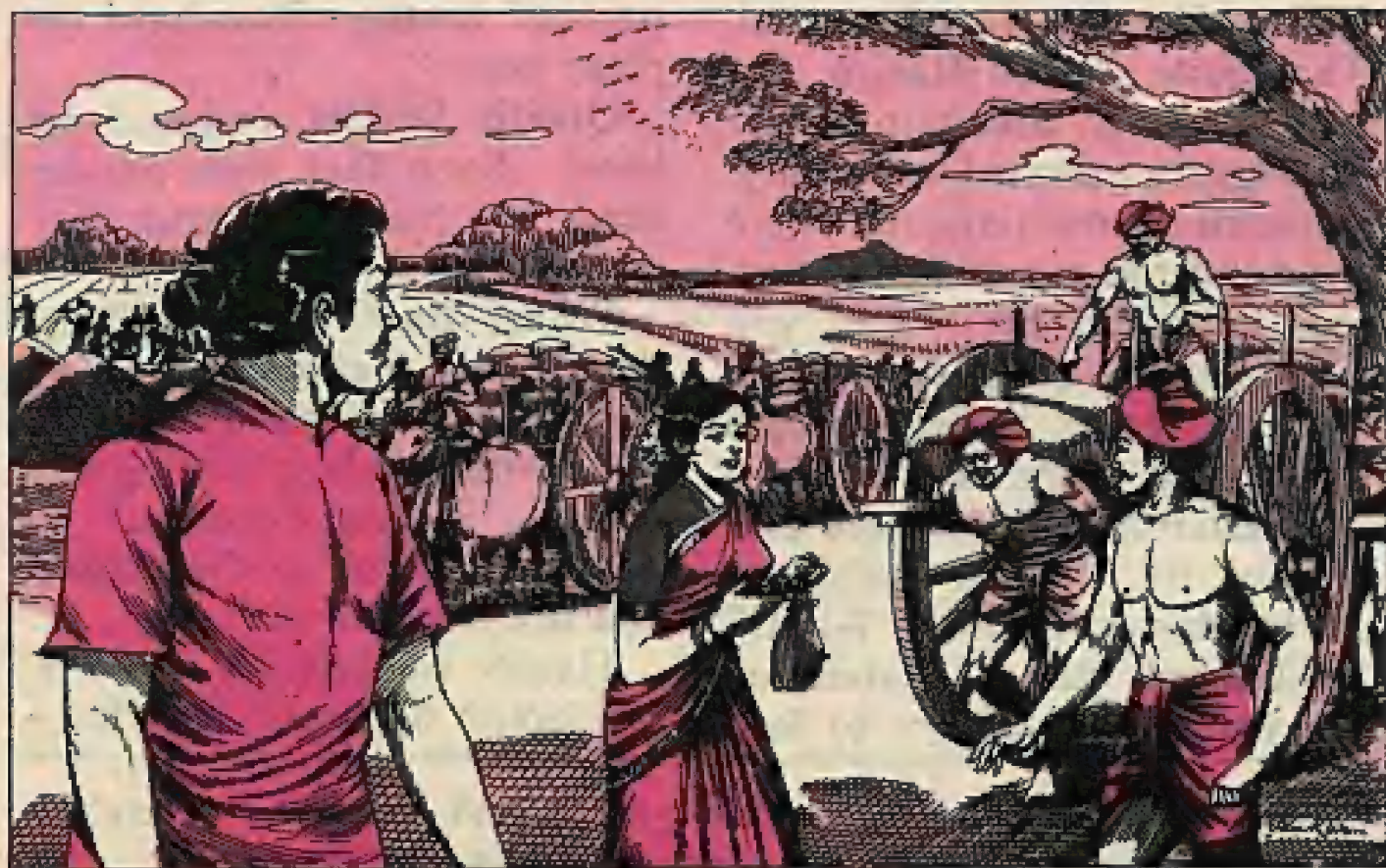
Harish felt tired when the sun was overhead. He sat down under a tree. Sushila too did the same.

The land that spread in front of the tree was deserted. As Harish looked on vacantly, he saw a crow pecking at the sand

at a distance of a few yards. Suddenly Sushila said, "You are likely to get some wealth if you dig at that spot!"

Harish took it as yet another sign of Sushila's madness. Nevertheless, he became a bit curious. He walked to the spot and had a closer look at it. It seemed someone had dug at the spot earlier and had filled it up again. Curiosity got the better of Harish. He began digging. At a depth of a foot he found buried some food. Under it, was a casket. He pulled it out and to his amazement found it full of gold coins.

Evidently, Some body had



buried the food and the wealth not long ago. He examined the gold coins and found them to be genuine.

Harish looked at his wife with surprise and asked, "How did you know about the buried wealth?"

"I did not know for certain. But I guessed it could be there. Why should a crow peck at dry earth unless there was some food buried under it? I remembered that last night was a full dark night. Bandits choose to bury their collections at such nights. And they do so near cremation grounds so that spirits would be at hand to guard the

wealth. In order to attract the attention of the spirits, they bury some food-stuffs along with the wealth," replied Sushila.

Harish could not but acknowledge Sushila's wisdom in making such a guess. But he did not understand how such a wise girl could speak nonsense earlier. He asked, "Will you please tell me why you asked the bearers of the corpse whether they were carrying one corpse or a hundred?"

"When a man dear to many dies, his death becomes equal to the death of a hundred. So many lament his death. What I wanted to know was whether



the corpse was that of an ordinary man or it was of an extraordinary man," explained Sushila.

Harish was stunned by Sushila's wisdom. He asked again, "But what did you mean by observing earlier that the rice the carters carried could be this year's or last year's?"

"If the owner of the rice fields had to surrender the yield to his moneylenders on account of last year's loan, then the rice can be said to be last year's. It should be considered this year's crop only if it went to the owner of the lands," answered Sushila.

Harish was thrilled to hear this. He now asked, "But what made you say that only two or three potfuls of rice were spent during our marriage feast?"

"Well, you might have fed hundreds to satisfy your vanity or to gain popularity or as a matter of custom. That does not mean much. Few are those who eat and sincerely bless us at their hearts. The quantity of rice you have spent for them is the only quantity truly spent," said Sushila.

Harish had no words to express his repentance as well as delight. He kept quiet for a long time and then apologised for his conduct to Sushila. Both then returned to their house and lived happily and wisely.

Harish realised that it was not easy to judge a person. One who seemed intelligent may in fact be quite stupid while one who seemed foolish may truly be wise. It required much patience and sympathy to understand a human being.





THE MATCH FOR THE PRINCESS

Long ago, the king of a certain land had a daughter who was quite whimsical. She could outwit almost anybody.

The king was very proud of his daughter. She was indeed a charming girl who showed much interest in learning.

When the princess grew up to be a beautiful young lady, the king was anxious to find out a suitable match for her.

"Father! I will marry one who can outwit me," announced the princess to the king. In his turn the king announced it in all the neighbouring kingdoms. Several princes came as candidates to marry the princess. But they had to go back as none of them could defeat the princess in battles of wit.

The king felt upset. What would happen if the princess continued to reject suitors one after another? He tried to persuade his daughter to give up her way, but in vain.

At last came a young prince from a distant land, accompanied by a servant. He was duly received in the palace and was entertained to excellent food and drink while a messenger went in, to inform the princess of his visit. Half an hour later the prince was ushered into the presence of the princess, in the inner apartment of the palace.

The prince was followed by his servant. Nobody objected to it, for, it was a part of the

When a person ceases to learn, he ceases to be fully alive
—Indira Gandhi

tradition for a prince to take a servant or a companion wherever he went.

Near the princess stood a maid-servant. Said the maid, "Welcome, O prince. But please tell the truth, whether you have come to outwit the princess and marry her or to love her and marry her!"

Answered the servant of the prince, "The prince has come here to love the princess and marry her. You can try him in whatever way you please."

"We need not try him," said the maid-servant of the princess, "Just let him hold the hand of our princess and thereby express his love for her."

The prince stepped forward and took the hand of the princess in his own hands. But suddenly the maid-servant gave out a loud laugh and said, "You

have been fooled, O prince! The lady to whom you have expressed your love is my maid-servant, disguised as the princess. I am the true princess!"

"If anybody has been fooled, it is you, O princess. The one who has taken your maid's hand is in fact my servant, disguised as the prince. I am the prince!" said the young man who had come in the guise of the servant.

The princess stood speechless. The news of her being outwitted reached the king. The prince and the princess were married with great pomp and show.

The king was delighted to get a son-in-law who was as witty as his daughter, if not more. Needless to say, the bride and the bridegroom were no less delighted!





Hanuman first bowed his head in deep reverence remembering Sita Devi. Then he said:

"You all saw me leap into the sky from the top of Mount Mahendra. I should tell you what happened thereafter. From amidst the sea rose a lofty golden hill before me. Thinking that it wished to check me, I was about to topple it. But the hill, whose name was Mainak, told me lovingly that all it wanted was to provide me with an opportunity for a little respite on my way. I had to refuse the kind offer on account of the urgency of my mission.

I was then confronted by the demoness Surasa, the mother of the serpents. She had received a boon to the effect that if she stood on a traveller's way, the

traveller cannot but enter her mouth. That only meant that she swallowed up whomever she confronted. When my request to her to let me go on my mission did not yield any result, I reduced myself to the size of a fly and entered her mouth and came out in the twinkling of an eye. Thus I fulfilled the condition without being swallowed up by the demoness. This pleased her and she let me proceed.

I had not gone far when I felt someone grabbing at my shadow on the sea. This was yet another demoness, infamous as Simhika, who could capture any creature by taking hold of its shadow. She looked forward to swallow me up, with her mouth fearfully agape. I in-



stantly made a dive into her mouth and dashed out through the rear part of her body, tearing her to death in the process.

Then I arrived at Lanka and tried to enter the city stealthily. The city was guarded by a spirit who too bore the name Lanka. She tried to stop me, but after getting a taste of my strength, she wisely refrained from obstructing my entry into the city.

I looked for Sita Devi in the palace of Ravana as well as in the fascinating buildings surrounding it. At last, to my great delight, I found her a prisoner in a garden. She looked like sorrow personified.

A number of demonesses surrounded her, keeping continuous vigil on her. My delight at discovering her soon changed into sadness at her plight."

After giving the account of his meeting with Sita Devi in detail, Hanuman said:

"Great is Mother Sita. Whoever sees her would be overwhelmed with a sense of devotion for her. She is the wife of a great hero. It is in fitness of things that she desires her husband to vanquish Ravana and rescue her. But I appeal to you to consider if it would not be right for us to kill Ravana ourselves and to free Sita Devi. In that case, instead of only giving the news of Sita Devi to Sri Rama, we could present her personally before him. To be frank, I could kill Ravana myself. Although his son Meghnad is in possession of the Weapon of Brahma, it could do me no harm. If you allow me, I could also put an end to the audacious Meghnad. Angada and Jambavan were sufficient to destroy all other demons. Besides, we have with us Maind and Dwividha, whom nobody could kill because of the protection they enjoy due

to certain boons. Tell me what you think of my proposal."

Angada, inspired at Hanuman's words, said, "I fully agree with what our hero has to say. It is wrong to appear before Sri Rama without Sita Devi, since we have already located her. Hanuman has killed a number of demons. Should we not be able to kill the rest? Let us lose no time in raiding Lanka."

But Jambavan pleaded, "I appreciate your sentiment, O Angada, but we must not do anything without the knowledge of Sri Rama."

Rama had asked the Vanaras to locate Sita, not to do anything further by themselves. Moreover, Sita Devi herself had declined to come away with Hanuman. The Vanaras now considered these facts and found Jambavan's advice most sensible.

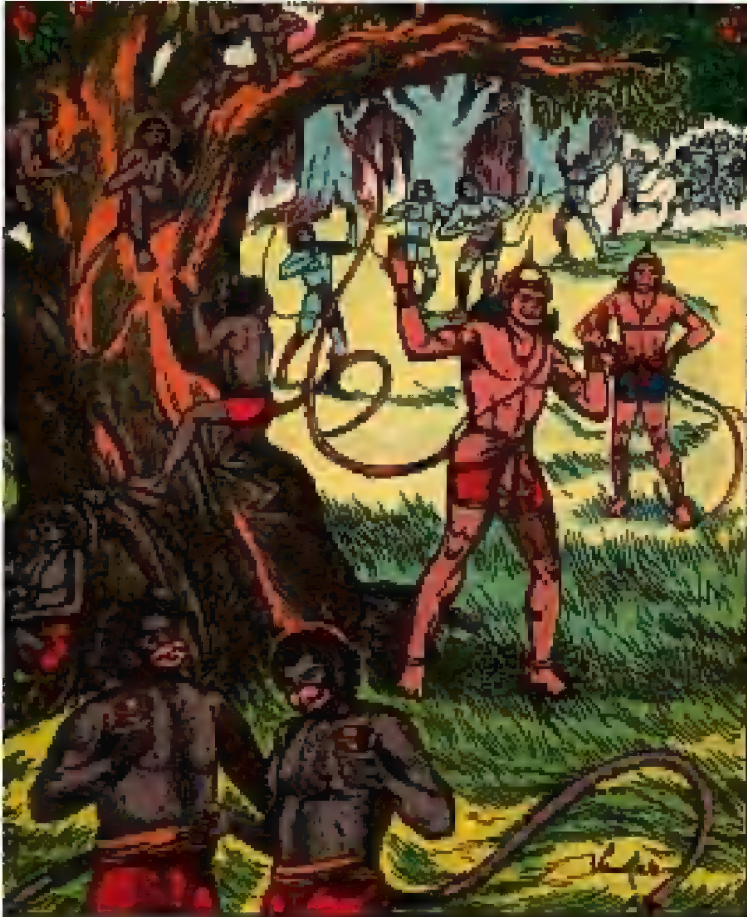
They leaped into the sky and advanced towards Sugriva's palace. They alighted at Madhuvan, a royal orchard at the outskirts of Kiskindhya. The Vanaras sought for Angada's permission to drink wine while relaxing in the orchard. Angada gave the permission, for, he appreciated the



great joy the Vanaras felt at the success of their mission.

But once they began drinking they forgot where to stop. Intoxicated, they soon raised a riot of joy! Some of them sang loudly while some others danced wildly. Others babbled on or chattered on. They did not stop with that much. Several of them climbed the beautiful trees and began plucking the fruits and flowers and hurling them at each other.

Dadhimukh, the maternal uncle of Sugriva, who was in charge of the garden, came running to the spot. He tried his best to dissuade the Vanaras from doing any mis-



chief to the garden. But his words fell on deaf ears. Hanuman even went to the extent of telling his comrades, "Make merry in your own way. I will see who has the courage to stop you!"

Angada proved no better. He announced, "If Hanuman would ask me to do even an evil, I will not hesitate to do it. Now that he asks us to be merry, whom on earth do we care?"

This encouraged the Vanaras further. They were mad with excitement. They drove away the guards of the orchard with blows and bites and drank up all the honey that was produced

and preserved in the garden.

Dadhimukh could not bear with this. He tried to control his grand-nephew, Angada, forcibly. But the young Angada was more than a match for him. Dadhimukh, after receiving a few hard blows from Angada, fled the orchard and ran to meet Sugriva.

Looking at the agonised face of Dadhimukh, Sugriva was afraid of some grave danger to his kingdom. He asked him most anxiously what made him look so very disturbed.

"O my king! What had never happened, during either your father Ruksharaja's rule or yours, has happened today. Angada and his party have intruded into Madhuvan and are doing havoc there. My guards have been beaten. Even I was not spared. Now it is for you to decide what is to be done about it," said Dadhimukh.

Just then Rama and Lakshmana reached there. Lakshmana asked Sugriva, "What is the matter with Dadhimukh? Why does he look so sad?"

Answered Sugriva, "The party of Vanaras which had proceeded to South in search of Sita Devi has just returned. The Vanaras have camped in

our orchard Madhuvan and have got drunk. I believe, they are conducting themselves in such a way elated by their success. The party includes Hanuman. He must have found out Sita Devi. The mighty combination of Angada, Jambavan and Hanuman could not fail to accomplish the task. Only their success could explain their conduct."

Rama and Lakshmana looked delighted.

Sugriva then told Dadhimukh, "Let us not mind the conduct of the Vanaras. I believe, they have achieved success in their mission. Let us pardon them. Now, please go back to the orchard and tell Angada that we are extremely eager to know all about their achievement."

Dadhimukh returned to Madhuvan and told Angada, "I am sorry for creating disturbance while you were merry-making. Being the crown-prince, you have every right to do as you please in this garden. But now you must proceed forthwith to Sri Rama's presence."

Angada announced to the Vanaras, "Listen, friends, the news of our arrival has already reached Sri Rama. I hope, you



have rested enough and the excellent honey has revived your spirit. We must not delay here any more."

Angada rose to the sky with a joyous jump. Other Vanaras followed suit.

In the meanwhile Sugriva was telling Rama, "I had fixed for the Vanaras a certain period within which to return. That period is over. If the Vanaras had returned without any success, they would feel guilty and would not create a stir in the orchard. I have not the slightest doubt that we are about to hear a piece of good news."

Soon the Vanaras descended before them, at a respectful

distance. Hanuman stepped forward and prostrated himself to Rama, Lakshmana and Sugriva and said, looking at Rama, "I have found Sita Devi."

"Where is she?" queried Rama with great eagerness.

Hanuman turned in the direction in which Sita Devi was and bowed his head. Then he turned to Rama again and said, "Across the sea is situated Lanka, the city of the demon-king Ravana. Sita Devi dwells there, in a garden, a prisoner of the demon-king. She is constantly weeping. She would perhaps have taken away her own life had I not met her at the right moment. However, she will not live for more than a month. You must do everything necessary during this period to rescue her. It was with great difficulty that I made

her believe that I was your emissary. She narrated to me an episode when a crow had attacked her while you were camping on Mount Chitrakut. This she did at my request so that you would have no doubt that I have met Sita Devi and none else."

Hanuman then handed over to Rama the jewel which Sita had given him. Rama took it and was overwhelmed with emotion.

With tears rolling down, he told Sugriva, "This jewel reminds me of so many sweet moments of the past. This had been given to Sita by King Janaka. This adorned Sita's forehead during our marriage. In this jewel I see not only Sita, but also King Janaka and King Dasharatha.

—Contd.





THE STRANGER'S SACRIFICE

Tales from the Panchatantra

This happened many centuries ago.

The King of Kausambi had a son who spent most of his time in the company of two other young men. One of them was the minister's son while the other one was the son of the royal treasurer.

The three youths were extremely fond of games and they whiled away their time in merry-making. One day the king, called the prince to his presence and chided him for his conduct. "As the heir to the throne, is it not your duty to sit in the court and learn the art of administration? Are you not ashamed of wasting your time in the pursuit of idle

pleasures?"

The prince felt extremely humiliated. He told his agony to his friends. "Let us once go out to some faraway place and earn some wealth. That would be proof enough for our parents that we were not worthless!" proposed the treasurer's son.

The idea appealed to the other two. After some lively discussion, they proceeded to Rohan hills, where, they had heard, seekers often came across gems.

As luck would have it, the three friends, after some search, got three most rare pieces of gems.

"It is not safe to carry the gems in our hands. Let us



swallow them. When we reach the city, we can drink some laxative and thereby bring out the gems easily," said the minister's son. His advice sounded quite sensible. They swallowed the gems.

A fellow named Subudhi was observing them from a hiding. He too had come to the hills in search of gems, but had found none. "When these youths would fall asleep, I will stab them to death and dig the gems out of their tummies," he told himself. He then approached the young men and expressed his desire to accompany them

to the city. The three friends had no reason to object to this.

While crossing a forest they happened to pass by the dwelling of a robber chief. The chief had a pet bird which could know how much and what kind of wealth a traveller carried.

When the bird spied upon the prince's party, it started whistling and shrieking. Its master understood its language. He instructed his assistants to capture the four travellers.

"My bird says that you are carrying gems!" shouted the robber chief as he began searching them. But since he found nothing he let them go.

As soon as they began to depart, the bird shrieked again. The robber chief stopped them again and announced, "My bird does not give wrong signal. Now it is dark. In day light tomorrow I will cut your bellies and see if there are gems within."

The four travellers were interned in a gloomy cave. At night Subudhi told them who he really was and why he followed them. Then he said, "Although I had momentarily grown greedy, I am not a bad character. I will sacrifice myself to save you. Thereby I

will atone for my sinful motive in following you."

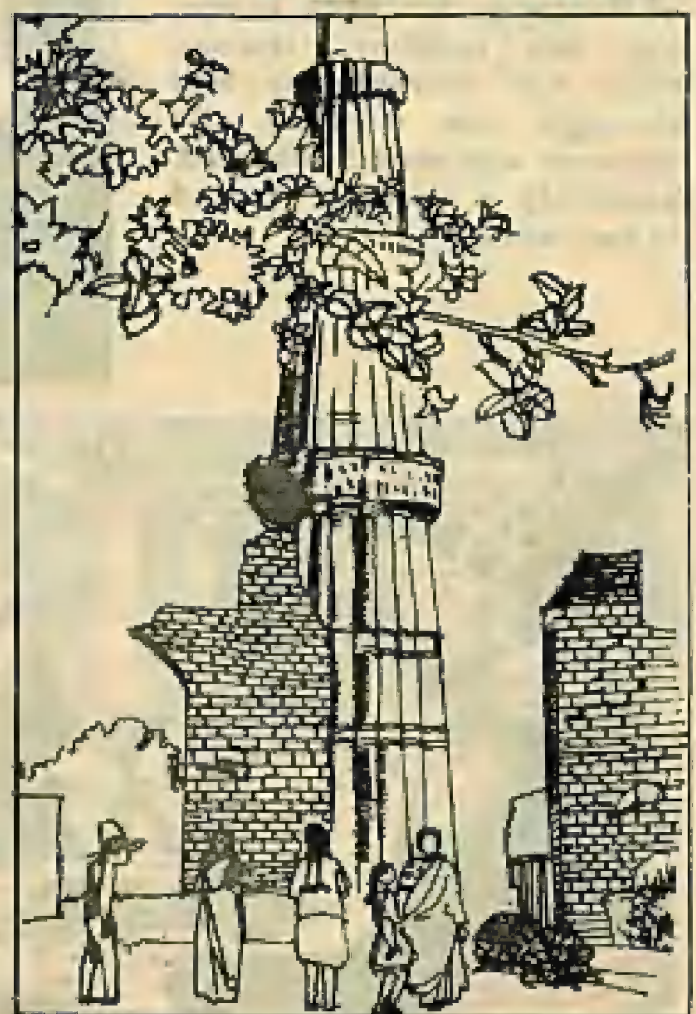
Next morning, when the four prisoners were produced before the robber chief, Subudhi stepped forward and pleaded, "I am their elder brother. Their death before my eyes would be too painful to me. Pray, kill me first."

The robber chief agreed to this and killed him and searched for the gem inside his belly. Satisfied that there was nothing hidden in his belly, he repented for

having killed him. "I should not repeat my foolish act," he told himself and released the other three prisoners. He killed the bird for misleading him.

The three friends quietly crossed the forest. Back in the city, they lived a better life, for, the noble sacrifice of the stranger had left a deep impression in their minds. They realised the virtues that remain hidden in men and tried to bring them forward to the surface through their actions.

SPOT THE TEN DIFFERENCES

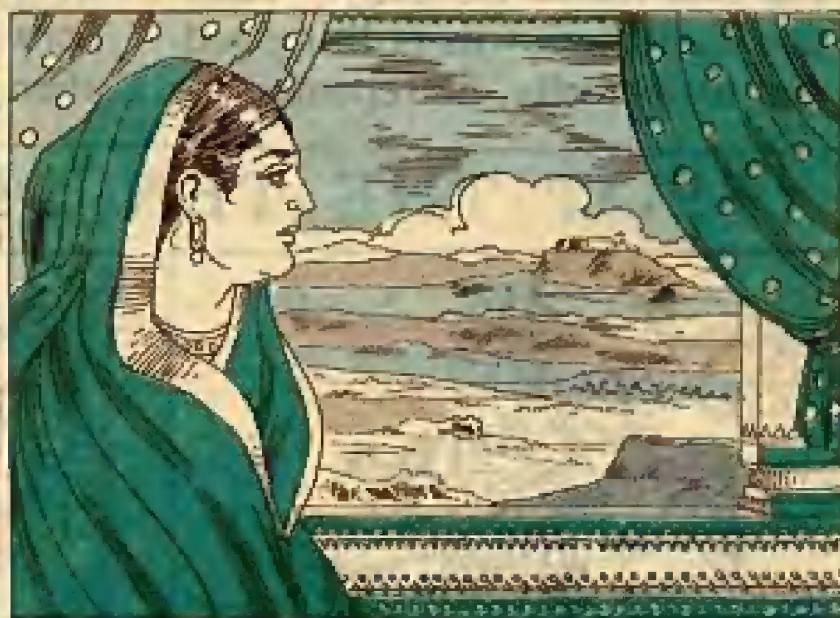


FALL OF THE LION'S FORT

Upon a hill-top of the Sahyadri range stood Simhagad or the Lion's Fort. The Mughals had captured it from the Marathas. A Rajput General, Uday Bhan, who was in the service of the Mughals, guarded it with a large number of soldiers.



Shivaji, the great Maratha hero, then lived in the fort of Pratapggarh. One morning, his mother, Jijabai, after her worship, looked through the window. At distance was seen Simhagad. Suddenly a thought flashed in her mind.



Shivaji, then somewhat unwell, passed his time in relaxation. That afternoon, when he sat down to play chess with his mother, she asked "My son! What will you give me if you are defeated in the game?" "Whatever you wish!" promised the smiling Shivaji.

Shivaji was defeated in the game. "What would you have, mother?" he asked indulgently. Jijabai pronounced gravely, "My son! I desire to have Simhagad!"

Even the mighty Shivaji was awe-struck, for Simhagad was no easy trophy!



But Shivaji had already promised to give whatever his mother would demand! There was only one hero who could dare to attack Simhagad. He was Tanaji Malusare. Shivaji sent for him. Tanaji's son was going to marry. But Tanaji left the party and galloped forth to meet his master.

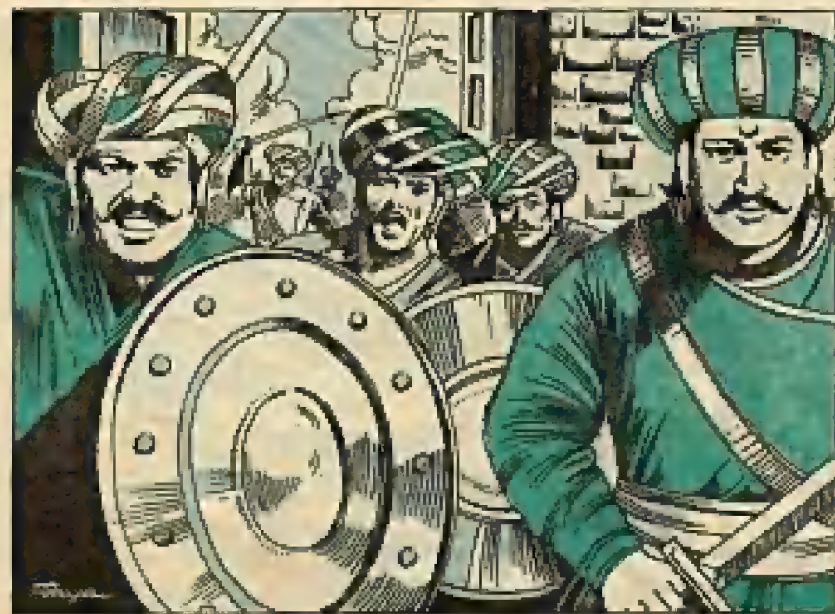
When Tanaji heard about Shivaji's promise to his mother, he did not hesitate for a moment, but chose a band of thousand valiant soldiers and marched towards Simhagad in a dark night, braving a rain.





The guards of the fort had perhaps fallen asleep. Tanaji assembled his soldiers at the rear side of the fort and directed Yashwanti, Shivaji's trained monitor lizard, to climb the rock, with a rope tied to its trunk. The faithful lizard reached the top and tied the rope to a tree.

The soldiers began climbing with the help of the strong rope. They worked so quietly that none in the fort could know about it until 300 soldiers had reached the hill-top.



But while climbing the wall of the fort, a Maratha soldier slipped down. The sound woke up the guards. The guards alerted their soldiers. However, those who had crossed the wall, opened the gate.

Soldiers of the fort rushed to fight with the invaders. They let loose a ferocious elephant, famous as Chandravally, to create scare among the Marathas. Tanaji instantly jumped onto its back and led it into the Mughal army before killing it.



Seven hundred Maratha soldiers were still below the hill. It would have been impossible to capture the fort with only three hundred men against the fort's large number of Arab, Afghan, Pathan and Rajput soldiers. But Tanaji fought with unprecedented courage and tact till the fort fell to his hands!

But Tanaji did not live to rejoice in the victory. When his deadbody was brought to Shivaji, said Shivaji with tears, "I got the 'Gad' (fort), but lost my Simha (Lion)!"



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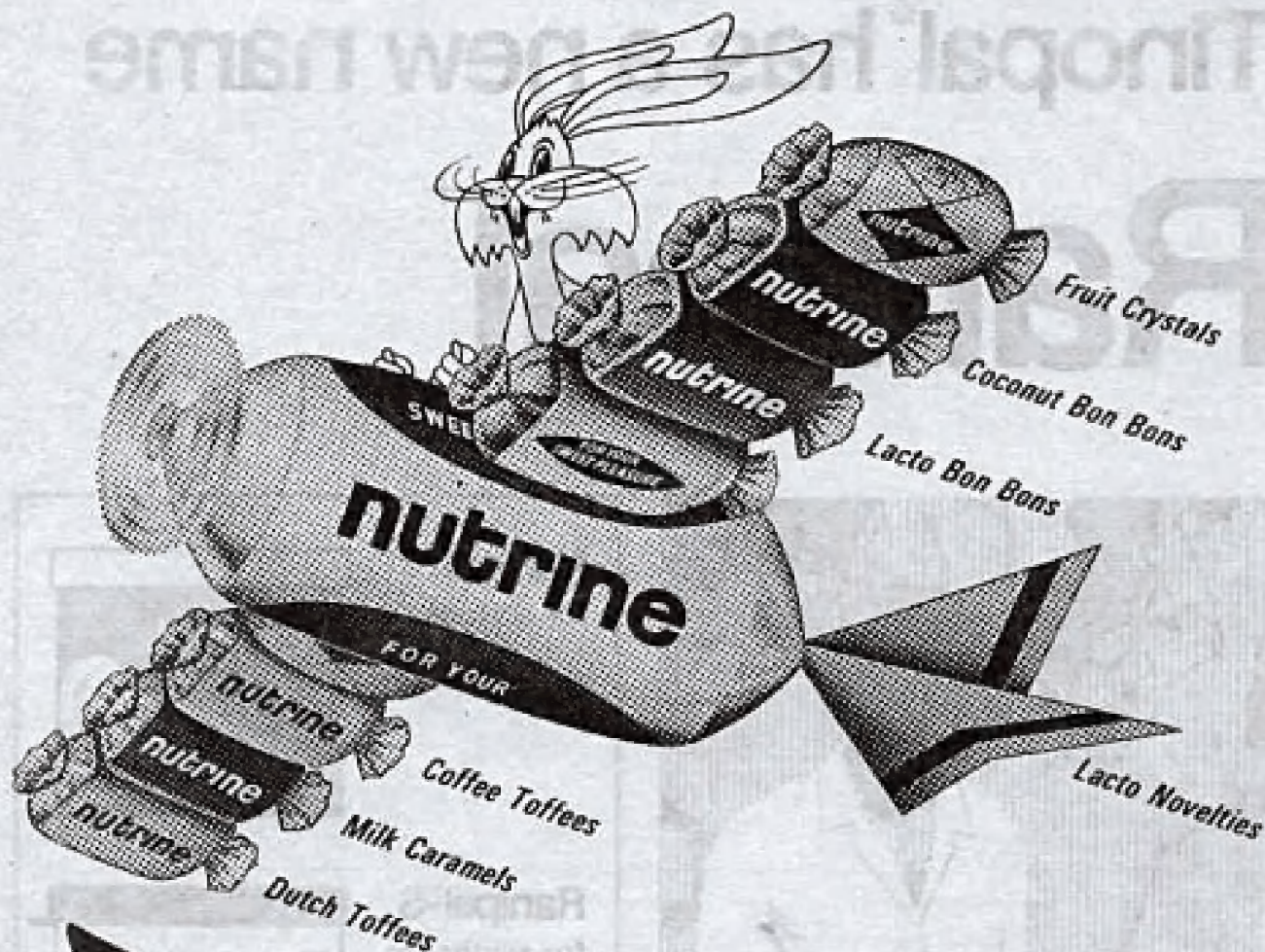
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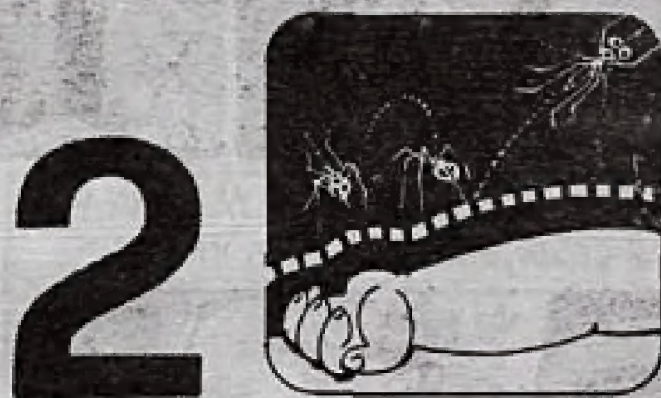
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